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LUO TRIBES AND CLANS

by

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

In 1936 I had an opportunity, through the generosity of the Leverhulme Grants Committee, to spend a few weeks in Kenya. In the conditions then prevailing in that colony the Kenya Government considered it unwise for me to visit either the Masai or the Turkana, as had been my intention, so I decided that my time would be best employed in making a short survey of the Luo people, very little having been written about them and much of that of poor quality.[1]

Some six weeks were spent in Lowland. In view of the shortness of time at my disposal, made yet shorter by exceptionally severe fever, my enquiry was limited to certain features of Luo social organization. It was particularly directed towards a survey of political structure to discover how similar was Luo political structure to that of the Lango, Nuer, Anuak, and other Nilotic peoples. Some of the results of this survey are now recorded. They would have been published earlier had not the war prevented my giving any attention to anthropological studies. Statements made in this paper refer to 1936.

I had hoped that the Ven. Archdeacon W. E. Owen, who knew the Luo better than anyone has known them, would have read this article. The Archdeacon died in 1945. I am most grateful to him and to Mrs. Owen, for without their support I would certainly not have been able to make so rapid a survey. My thanks are also due to the many Luo who, largely out of regard for the Archdeacon and Mrs. Owen, assisted me in my enquiry.

The Luo of Kenya are a Nilotic people of some 500,000 souls bordering Lake Victoria Nyanza to the north and south of Kavirondo Gulf. Some outlying sections also stretch into Tanganyika. The parts of Lowland which lie back from the lake, e.g. Alego and Ugenya tribal areas, are undulating country in which the homesteads are built along the slopes (*thare*, sing. *thar*, also meaning 'home') of the successive ridges. The country near the lake is less broken. The rainfall is everywhere heavy and well-distributed. The people are mainly agricultural, though they keep

[1] C.W. Hobley, 'Kavirondo', *The Geographical Journal*, 1898; Sir Hesketh Bell, *The Uganda Protectorate*, Vol. II, Chap. XVIII, 1902; C. W. Hobley, 'Eastern Uganda', *Occasional Papers of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, No. 1, 1902; G. A. J. Hattersley, 'The Nilotic Kavirondo', *J.R.A.I.*, 1907; The Rev. N. Shaw, 'The Religious Conceptions of the Kavirondo', *Anthropos*, 1910; C. M. Dobbs, 'Fishing in Kavirondo Gulf', *J.E.A.N.H.S.*, 1927; The Rev. H. Hattersley, 'Some Customs of the Lowveld Nilotic Kavirondo Living in South Kavirondo', *Anthropos*, 1928; K. C. Shaw, 'Luo Marriage Customs', *J.E.A.N.H.S.*, 1932; Archdeacon W. E. Owen, 'Food Production and Kindred Matters amongst the Luo', *J.E.A.N.H.S.*, 1933.

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many cattle, sheep, and goats and most of their country is suitable for a pastoral life. Fishing plays a big part in the economy of the lakeside tribes. Hunting is little practised to-day, but in the old days organized hunts were a regular feature.

The homestead, the residence of an elementary family or joint family, is generally called *dala*, a Bantu word, but in the more purely Luo parts of the country the Nilotic word *pachu* (pl. *mier*) is used, especially by the older men. It is usually surrounded by a thick hedge of euphorbia, a narrow gap in which is the entrance to the kraal, round which are the huts and granaries. Nothing is said about the domestic life of such homesteads nor of kinship life in this article, for its purpose is to outline the nature of the larger structural groups.

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At the present time Luoland is divided into a number of administrative locations. These locations, shown on the map, vary considerably in size of area and population. According to official returns most have populations of under 20,000 and the only two with populations of over 30,000 are Alego (33,604 with density of 244 to the square mile) and Samia (41,011 with density of 192). Density of population is greatest in some of the fertile northerly locations: North Ugenya (29,362 with density of 518), South Ugenya (7,497 with density of 541), and North Gem (29,614 with density of 387). It is lowest in some of the lakeside locations in South Kavirondo: Kanyagwi (1,904 with density of 12), Kanyamkago (2,047 with density of 21), and Gwasi (4,924 with density of 42).

These locations correspond approximately with the old tribal areas of the Luo. The main differences are that in South Kavirondo Kanyamkoyo location (20,207 with density of 162), Muhuhu location (20,465 with density of 174), and Kabondo location (7,926 with density of 128) comprised a single tribe, as did North Gem and South Gem (19,642 with density of 237), North Ugenya and South Ugenya, and West Kano (28,447 with density of 268) and East Kano (23,720 with density of 158).

It is beyond question that the whole of Luoland was once occupied by Bantu and Nilo-Hamitic tribes and that the pressure which has continued, particularly against the Bantu, on the confines of Luoland to the north, east, and south, almost up to the present day is the end of a gradual process of expansion and assimilation. The Luo have been greatly influenced by Bantu culture during its development.

The expansion of the Luo towards the south has resulted in their division into two parts between which Kisumu location forms a narrow bridge, the Luo of Central Kavirondo, the *Joluo*, the 'Inside People', and the Luo of South Kavirondo, the *Jonam*, the 'Outside People'. The southwards migration seems to have been across the gulf from Uyoma and Asembo to Karungu, and not round it and to have taken place over several generations, commencing, if the genealogies are to be trusted about seven generations ago. Across the gulf the Luo came up against Bantu (Abasi) and Nilo-Hamitic (Lango) tribes. The conquest and cultural

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101 assimilation of these tribes were incomplete when European occupation
174 of the country slowed down the momentum of colonization. The tribes living to-day to the south of the gulf who are said to be Luo in origin and who speak Luo are Kano, Nyakor, Kavirondo, Dhiambo, Kabondo, and Kavirondo), Kwia, Kanyala, Gem, Kanyamwa, Kanagi, Kabras, Kwavirondo, Kanyadoto, Kabras, and Sakwa. The other localities on the sketch-map are occupied by Bantu tribes who either speak Luo only, like the Kagwa (included in the map in the Kwia location) and the Maharo; or speak Luo as well as their own language, like the [41] Kamagoga, Kakamigiri, and Gwasi. In our instance, that of the Wanjara, who are immediate to the Kavirondo, a Luo tribe is said to have adopted a Bantu dialect to the loss of their own tongue because, according to the Luo myth, their ancestor killed his father in a hunting accident, and they are, on account of their Luo origin, regarded more favourably by the Luo than other Bantu-speaking tribes. The Kamagambo and Kanyamkago are said to be of Nilo-Hamitic origin, though both speak Luo to-day. Tribes which to-day speak only Luo and have Luo customs are regarded as Luo and it would be most insulting to call a member of one of them 'Kamasi' or 'Lango'. There is much intermarriage between Luo of pure descent and assimilated or partly assimilated Bantu. At the present day [50] there is also some intermarriage with the Kisi Bantu, though I was told 96] that a Luo would not take one of their daughters as his chief wife. In Central Kavirondo assimilation in the sense of conquest and settlement has gone much further and, except for the Wakedo, who speak both Luo [41] and Bantu, the line of linguistic cleavage is clearer cut.

Luo expansion at the expense of the Bantu was like a line of shooting 174 crabs, each tribe driving out the one in front of it to seek compensation 69 from one yet further in front, generally a Bantu tribe. Thus when the Uyoma and Asembo tribes priorly occupied what is now Uyoma territory they found there the tribes of Kanyamwa and Gem (of South Kavirondo) whom they pushed across the gulf into what was then Bantu country. Later the Uyoma people drove out the Asembo people into their present territory. These movements have led to a considerable dispersal of lineages so that lineages of the same clan are found to-day in both Central and South Kavirondo. Lineages of the minorities are found in the Gem tribe of South Kavirondo and in the tribe of the same name in Central Kavirondo. Lineages of the Kanyada tribe have agnatic kinship with the Jokadem lineage of the Alego tribe, and the Luo elements in the Kwavi and Kanyamwa tribes of Tanganyika are said to have come from Kajulo and Kadimo and to have kinsmen in those areas.

It is not surprising therefore that the Luo conquer who pushed other Luo tribes into contact with, and conquest of, Bantu are held to have been the least influenced by Bantu culture in their speech and way of life. [33] This reputation is enjoyed by the people of Uyoma, Sasa, and Asembo. The low-lying country of these tribes, a discovered savannah plain with patches of swamp and riverine grassland, from which Sasa takes its name, suffers from seasonal drought: in all reminding one of the lowerlands of some of the Nilotic cousins of the Luo in the Sudan.

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Each Luo tribe (*piny*), coextensive in the main, as has been said, with the present administrative location, was an autonomous political unit. As among the Nuer, one of the chief characteristics of a Luo tribe, and one by which its autonomy may be defined, is to be found in the different ways in which homicide was regarded and treated in pre-European days. There were local variations but in general the principle followed was that *rut*, compensation (a girl or cattle for a kinsman of the slain man to marry a wife with and raise heirs to his name,) was paid only for the killing of a fellow tribesman. No *rut* was paid for killing men of another tribe in war, raids, or as an outcome of the ritual demonstration called *bura*,[1] for they were *mwonjo*, enemies, and a state of feud between the lineages involved, and sometimes of war between the two tribes, developed. Likewise no compensation could be paid for slaying a clansman, but atonement was made by the sacrifice of an ox, provided by the kin of the slayer and eaten by representatives of the whole clan, who might moreover insist on the slayer marrying a wife to the name of the dead man. The line of political cleavage between tribe and tribe thus ran through the points at which the obligation to pay compensation or make atonement for homicides ended for a particular group of people and it is so regarded by the Luo themselves. For example, when the Uyoma people and the Asembo people lived in the same territory they paid compensation for homicide between them but when they separated they ceased to pay it.

In tribes in which the tribesmen, except for some small lineages of strangers (*jodak*) intermingled with the dominant clan, are all members of the same clan, such as Kanyamwoya tribe, compensation for homicide was not, or was rarely, paid, because the strangers had close kinship links with the dominant clan and would, I was told, have refused compensation in cattle, though they might have accepted a girl, since had they done so they would have emphasized a distinction they were anxious to obliterate. It was only in tribes in which there were beside the dominant clan other powerful lineages occupying their own lands within the tribal territory, as the Jokakwa and Kaluo in Alego, that *rut* was paid regularly for homicide and could be enforced by appeal to arms. In other words, where there was considerable political cohesion, expressed in terms of clanship, the killing of a man was treated as a sin; where there were marked sectional cleavages within the political unit of the tribe it was treated as a tort; and where there were social links but political separateness it was treated, unless it was a wanton act of individual homicide, as provocation to a feud but without moral disapproval or means of legal settlement.

The political boundary, which in its moral dimension signified a balanced hostility between adjacent tribal groups, had its material expression in the *thim*. The *thim* was a stretch of bush country, the home of buffalo,

[1] If a man of one tribe killed a man of a different tribe in a personal quarrel, and not in war making, feud, or ritual duel connection, he might pay compensation in cattle, *e.g.* if a Kanyamwoya man killed for some private reason a Kotte man who was taking cattle to his in-laws in Kanyamwoya territory.

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lion, leopard, and elephant, left unoccupied between a tribe and its neighbours, a no-man's land between them. Such stretches of country were found between tribe and tribe but not between segments of a tribe, even when the segments were of different clans, e.g. between Alego and Gem but not between the Jolieje, the Jokakam, and the Jokaruoth, in Alego tribe. The skin was sometimes extensive, as broad as ten miles.

Tribe raided tribe across the skin dividing them and here took place also the ritual demonstrations of two hosts. When a tribal dignitary, a man of substance, or a renowned warrior, died, or a man was killed in war, he was left unburied till the whole tribe, or a large segment of it, had advanced across the skin and demonstrated against the homesteads of a neighbouring tribe, parading their cattle before them and calling on their men with insults and abuse to come out and fight. Cattle were taken to entice the enemy into battle by a display of bravery at his door and to compel the brave party to hold their ground should they be attacked, it being held ignoble for a herdsman not to defend his herd to the death. In this way Uyoma used to go out against Sakwa, Sauri against Asembo, Kwanza, and Gem, the Gem tribe to the south of the gulf against Kanyamkoyo, Kabwor, Kanyamwa, and Kanyamwa, Kanyamkoyo against Kwia, Gem, Myakor, the Kanii Banta, and even the Lumbwa. Where a Luo tribe bordered a Banta tribe they made love against it in the same manner as Luo tribes made it against one another, the Banta tribes of Kavirondo being structurally of the same order as Luo tribes. Usually the demonstrating party was not attacked. This only happened on occasions when brave parties of opposite tribes met, each declaring its intention to challenge the other to battle, or when the demonstration turned into a raid for cattle, or when homesteads were sacked. The custom is kept up, but to-day is no more than a mimic skirmish, the cattle being driven into the skin where the people smash the shields and grasses. They bring back with them handfuls of a creeper to represent cattle taken from an enemy and throw them on the roof of the dead man's hut.

There was nothing that can be described as political office in a Luo tribe. The *ruoth* was an influential person, but no more. He was richer than his fellows in wives and cattle and people came often to his house to eat there and to discuss affairs of the day. I was told that a poor man might ask him for the gift of a cow to help him marry and that it was considered an honour to marry into his family. Any man gaining an enhanced social position of the kind was called *ruoth*, though he was in most instances a member of the dominant clan of the tribe. Some warriors (*thuondi*, *bulle*) were renown for their courage and resource in war and were asked to lead raids into enemy territory. Though admired, a war leader, sometimes called *thuon jatula*, was not necessarily a *ruoth* or rich man, for he received little, perhaps a single cow, as his portion of the spoils of war. The position was not hereditary but derived from individual prowess and initiative. The *wuon gweng*, 'father of the land', seems also, at any rate in some parts of Lowland, to have been a man of influence in each district. He was a senior member of a lineage of the dominant clan of the tribe and settled land disputes. The one who repre-

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control the senior lineage of the clan sacrificed to the sacred spear of the clan and pointed it towards the enemy before tribal war.

There were also a number of ritual experts. The most important of these, and the most important tribal figure among the Luo, seems to have been the *jabilo*, who in the language of African literature would be described as a tribal medicine-man or witchdoctor. There was one of these functionaries in each large tribal segment but one in a tribe was generally more influential than the others and a tribe requiring the services of an exceptionally famous *jabilo* might ask for them even if he lived in a distant tribe. His functions, which tended to pass from father to son, are said to have been to divine the fortunes of war, to curse the enemy, and to make magic to secure victory and the safety of the warriors. He kept his *bilo*, war magic, in horns in a granary. He did not himself accompany a raid but in return for his ritual services he received part of the spoils and according to some informants was entrusted with its division. Consequently he was a rich man of substance. The *jabilo* was also, at least sometimes, the *jakath* or *were kath*, the rainmaker, while at other times the rainmaker seems to have been a different person to the *jabilo*. Rainmakers among neighbouring Bantu peoples were also appointed to. It is also said that the people had to wait permission of the *jabilo* to sow and that he had ritual functions in cases of homicide within the tribe and that he was a peacemaker who could intervene in a fight by dragging his leopard skin along the ground between the two sides.

4

In each tribe there is a dominant clan or lineage. The characteristics of a Luo clan are much the same as those I have described for the Nuer.

The Luo clan (*dho ot*) has a lineage structure, which means that every member of it can trace his exact genealogical relationship to every other member. Lineages (*dho sub*) are differentiated by adding to the name of a clan or of a larger lineage the copulative *ma* and the name of a smaller branch, as among the Lango, e.g. *Jonyo ma Jokayilo* are the Jokayilo major lineage of the Jonyo maximal lineage of the JoAlingo clan. Collateral lineages are sometimes said to be *kanyalego*, presumably from *ayalo*, co-wife, to one another.

These larger clans associated with tribal territories are not always exogamous to-day, though they are believed to have been so in past times. It would be confusing to speak of two groups identical in their structural features by different terms because maximal lineages cannot intermarry in one and can intermarry in the other, so I use the word 'clan' for both, having stated a qualification to the accepted use of the term. Marriage is generally forbidden within the clan but it is recognised that the distance between maximal lineages may become so great, both in lineage-distance and through political and social separation, as to allow intermarriage between them. This has happened in the JoAlingo clan of Alego where two main lineages, the Jothigo and the KaDimgo quarrelled and now intermarry sometimes. On the other hand marriage is not permitted within such big clans as the KaNyikal of Seme, the KaKwanyo of Kanyamkoya, and

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the JoOwiu of Uyoma; and is not approved, though sometimes permitted, even between such fraternal clans as the dominant clans of Kanyamuya, Kisumu, Kadem, Kanyagis, and Kabwor. The young men are rebelling against the prohibitions. Likewise I was told that though the JoKOwiu marry into the fraternal clan of Omia (Asembo) it is thought that such marriage may not be very fruitful.

Nevertheless in those big clans within which marriage is prohibited or where it is not approved between fraternal clans the custom of *ruak* is permitted. *Ruak* is a socially recognized love-making in which the youths court the girls and bring them to the *simbu* or bachelor's hut and sleep with them there and have relations with them *mere ruak*. Thus the KaKwaka and KaOkelo lineages of the JoOwiu clan of Uyoma may *ruak* between them, a practice said to date from two generations ago; likewise the KaGumbe and KaDigo lineages of the KaWiykal clan of Sauri, though in their case it is said from the last generation only; likewise the JokOwidi and JokOgul of the KaKwanyaya of Kanyamuya. In these instances were a girl to be made pregnant her lover could not marry her.

When two lineages of the same clan are becoming widely separated and are beginning to *ruak* between them it is done at first with discretion, because the older men are opposed to the innovation, then in open affairs in the bachelors' hut. Finally marriage is encouraged and perhaps eventually permitted, in the first place the less approved form of marriage by abduction (*puc*) and then the ordinary form (*nadar*). When marriage begins to take place, and even more when it has the approval of the elders, it may be taken to be an indication of political fusion, for it was found among the Luo, as among the Nuer, that political values are stated in the language of kinship and that the politico-territorial system is reflected in the lineage system.

A man may not marry a mother's mother's daughter, in the classificatory sense if her mother was a member of his maximal lineage but he can marry her if her mother belonged to a collateral maximal lineage of his clan, though even then the elders do not always approve. The general principle of exogamy is that a man must not marry any woman whom he regards as a *wuot*, a cognatic relative, and Luo reckon kinship as widely as to exclude a man from marrying into his maternal grandmother's clan and his maternal great grandmother's maximal lineage, though it must be said that there is often disagreement, especially between men of different generations about the permissibility of marriage between distantly related persons, that is to say, about borderline cases. In spite of some divergence of opinion however it may be stated that for the Luo, people are either *wuot*, kinsfolk, or *mangu*, enemies. A man cannot marry his and therefore must marry an 'enemy'. Hence when marriage is allowed between two groups it means that there is no kinship between them or that kinship is no longer recognized between them for purposes of exogamy and this, as said above, is an indication of political opposition, so that one often hears Luo say of a neighbouring tribe, e.g. a Kenyaruya man of the Kwia tribe, 'They are enemies, we marry them'. In other words adjacent tribes are structurally opposed segments in the tribal system

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while relations of a personal kind and kinship links between individuals run across their common frontiers and are compelled to do so by the exogamous rules obtaining in Luo society.

Several of the clans and maximal lineages possess sacred spears and other objects believed to have belonged to their founders. The best known sacred spear (*nyag ma lima*, spear of sacrifice) is the *nyag* Alego, the spear of Alego, the founder of the JoAlego clan. In Ugenya the JokaGer clan have several such spears and there are others in possession of the lineages descended from Ciwanya to the south of the gulf. Where there are important *simaguru* lineages in a tribe they may also have their sacred objects, e.g. in Alego the KoLuo and the JokOpelo have sacred spears and the Jokagere have a sacred stone and a sacred pot handed down from their founders. These objects are symbols of the unity of a clan or lineage and, by extension, of the tribe or tribal segment in which it is dominant, and they were used ritually in time of war or of common calamity, such as drought and invasion by locusts. They were generally, if not always to be held by the senior line (*dhe ot ma dwong'*) of a lineage or clan and are kept either in a granary or in hiding in the bush. The senior line is often called on by junior collateral lines to perform important sacrifices for them and the senior lineage might to provide the sacrificial beast at ceremonies common to all the lineages. I was told also that while each lineage had its own *gweng*, 'father of the land' the own *gweng* of the senior lineage had chief prestige among them.

Some clans and lineages have certain ritual prohibitions (*kuor*), mostly on certain foods, particularly kidneys and liver. The Luo do not give the impression of attaching much importance to them and if a man and a woman observe the same taboo it is not in itself a bar to marriage. Reference must also be made to clan and lineage honorific, or praise, names. The *nying pook* is generally derived from the name of a paternal ancestor whose name is a lineage eponymous, e.g. Olwiri (see the chart of the JoOwiri clan) can be called, according to the circumstances, *wuod* (son of) KoOwiri, *wuod* Kolieje, and *wuod* Owila. These names are much used at ceremonial gatherings, especially at large beer parties.

A feature of clanship which would seem to be of some importance is the annual inter-lineage wrestling. Unfortunately, I only became aware of these shortly before I left Lusland and had afterwards no further opportunity to enquire further into the custom, or to discover whether it is practised all over Lusland or only in some tribal areas, such as Uyoma where the closely related collateral lineages wrestle for practice prior to the wrestling matches between the big lineages. Thus the KoOkwiri are matched against the KoOkwog, then these two lineages together against the Kokwanga and KaMuchu, and so on. The lineages send a messenger to challenge the other party and when they meet an elder presides over the joint beats and the exhibition matches between famous wrestlers on each side. The matches are said to occasion much excitement among the spectators.

The sketch given above of the Luo clan is only an outline delineating features of it. A little detail is filled in here and there in the following

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613 614 section where are recorded some notes about the JoAlego clan of Alego tribe, the JoOwila clan of Uyoma tribe, the KaNyikal clan of Sakwa tribe, and the KaRamogo clan of Kanyamkoya tribe. It must be borne in mind in reference to these examples, as in regard to the rules of exogamy noted earlier, that these clans are associated with tribal territories and that there are many small lineages, many of them of Bantu origin, which have not the same spread in genealogical or physical space and have not the same depth in lineage structure; also, that all the main clans ultimately trace their descent from the same mythological names of Podho and Ramogi so that it would be possible to place them all on a single chart of descent. Since the smaller stranger lineages have points of graft on the trees of the dominant clans it might be possible to place the whole Luo people on a single chart. The clans, as I have described them, are, however, the largest descent groups which have eponymous ancestors, who are considered by the Luo to be the points at which an exact record of ancent passes into a hazy place of tradition where a single line of mythological ancestors is finally lost in the beginnings of the world. They are the points at which genealogical structure begins.

§

173 613 614 In the Alego tribe the dominant clans are the JoAlego with its maximal lineages, the JoSego and the KaDongo. There are a number of other clans and large lineages living in the tribal territory, apart from small stranger groups and individuals. The two most powerful of these stranger clans are the Kenneth and Kakan (JokAsenago). Other clans or lineages of some importance are the KaLoo, JoMur, JoAgoro, JokOgelo, KaNyiuok, KaRapel (JoKawi), JoUmala, KaLikada, and JoUyawa. The presence of these clans and lineages in Alego and their inter-tribal relations with the JoAlego are accounted for in a number of traditions or myths. These myths relate that when Alego entered the country from the west (Yimbo or Kadimo) he found there a people called Kombekondo and they and Alego's people live together in peace. Then the Kombekondo people began to disperse and were lost and the whole of the land came into possession of Alego and his sons. Then came other clans after Alego into the country but Alego fought them and compelled them to settle elsewhere. Then the elder sons of Malijuok crossed the gulf and settled in what is now called South Kavirondo and Malijuok was left with his younger children, Seje, Nyidenge, and three daughters, Nyiwat, Anyango, and Ajenga.

Other clans now entered the country with the permission of the Alego folk (the story is told by them). Come Rapik and married Nyiwat and Anyango and begat the clan of the Kakan, who count as uncle, in-law, to the JoAlego. Then came Agoe (from Kadiela or Budama) and asked Malijuok for permission to settle on the land and Malijuok agreed that he and his people might live in hill Akara. When Malijuok died Agoe planned to kill his sons Seje and Nyidenge to wear the veil from them. Seje heard of this plot and summoned Nyiuok, Uyawa, Agoro, Rapik, and others (the lineages are personified in the story) to make war against

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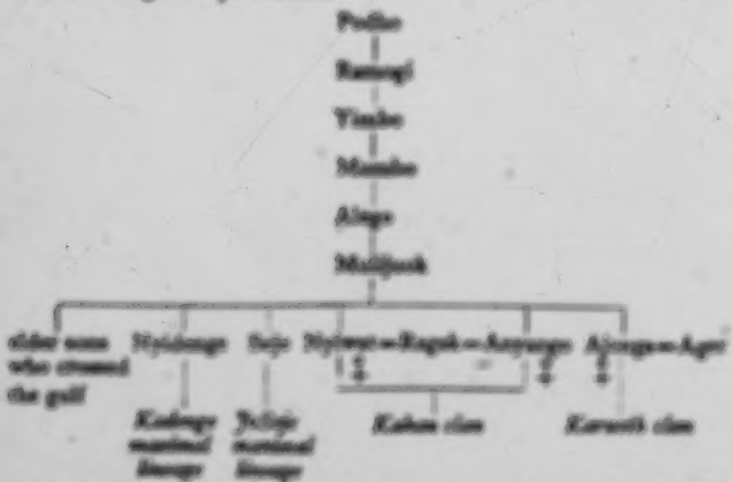
the people of Ager, whom they defeated. Ager later asked for the hand of Ajenga by whom he begat the Kaiwath clan, who also stand to the Alego 173
folk as relatives-in-law. The genealogy given below illustrates the story. 613
From Mulijuok to the present day there are nine to ten generations. 614
Other stories, which I do not recount here, explain the relations between the Kakwa and the JoUyowa and other clans in Alego tribal territory. In these myths the tribal structure is presented in terms of lineages and the lineages are personified.



The JoAlego genealogy has been presented in its simplest form, pruned 613
of all subsidiary branches. The JoOwila clan is shown in slightly fuller 614
form to illustrate better the lineage structure of a typical Luo clan. The
JoOwila are the dominant clan in Uyoma (pop. 11,000, density 91·2).
Owila, the ancestor of the clan, came from Alego and brought with him
the various clans now living in Uyoma together with the people who now
occupy Asembo (where the dominant clan are the Kulo) to which country
the Uyoma people drove them after a quarrel. Though there are many
stranger lineages living in Uyoma its population is probably less mixed
than is the case in most tribal areas.

The JoOwila clan divides into four main branches or maximal lineages, as shown in the chart below, the JokOkolo or JokOkong being the senior line. These four lineages do not intermarry. Each owns a distinct part of the tribal territory though the members of one lineage are frequently found living in the territory of another. The KaKwongo and KaAbudha, having the same ancestress regard themselves as a single segment in relation to KaOkolo and KaOlweri. Genealogical links through females with stranger lineages living with the clan are not shown on the chart.

The relativity of lineage values, to which I have given some attention in my book on the Nuer, may here be touched on, using the JoOwila

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G13 G14 clan as an illustration. Lineage names are in italics. Only one line is shown to its full depth. When Okwiri is asked what is his lineage in his tribal area he will probably say: *'dhe nduu KoOtuul'*, 'my lineage are the KoOtuul'. If further asked: 'Which branch of the KoOtuul?' (*'KoOtuul nee dho ee mam'*) he would reply: *'KoOtuul nee KoDjoje'* and in situations in which Kojoje stand opposed to JokOrum he would probably give KoJoje as his lineage in the first instance. When speaking of the JokAkech or any other medial lineage he would call himself a KoOtuul man. In speaking of the KoAkwalla or another of the maximal lineages he would call himself a member of the KoOkelo lineage. This feature of the lineage systems is too well known to be elaborated further.

2:Evans-Pritchard E-S (1936) 1969
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In Sanza (pop. 29,919, density 211·6) the dominant clan is the KeNyikal, the main divisions of which are the Kadayo and the KeGumbu. Gumbu being a foundling adopted and brought up by Nyikal. I omit a genealogy of this clan for reasons of space but would draw passing attention to the common feature of lineage systems by which stranger lineages are grafted into the structure of the dominant clan of the tribe by mythological fictions. The KeGumbu, to whom I have just alluded, is a very powerful lineage. Another strong lineage in Sanza are the KeYila. According to the myth Yila was an Alego man who took to the bachelors' hut Amulo daughter of Nyikal and made her pregnant. He then fled the country. Amulo was an Amazon with a will of her own and she later went to fetch her lover and brought him back to Sanza with his sons from whom are descended lineages, by a wife whom he had married in his exile. Another big clan in Sanza are the Kalenga. Nyikal had a servant called Anam who used to take his sons to the edge of the lake to collect fodder for the calves. One day they found there a man called Onyango. Nyikal adopted this stranger together with Anam, and Kalenga is the joint name for their descendants, the KeAnam and the KeOnyango.

The last clan of the structure of which I shall give an outline are the KeBarumoyo. Jok, who appears to be the same as the Maljuok of the Alego myth, began two sons. One of them, Cuoyo, is the ancestor of the principal lineages in the tribal areas of Kimoni, Kanyamwa, Kabwa, Karungu, and Kadem. The other is the ancestor of the KeBarumoyo clan, who are dominant in the locations of Kanyamwa (Kadong), Mumbo and Kabondo. According to the Alego myth there were two other brothers, Soje and Nyidenge, as has been noted, but these are not given in their genealogies by the people to the south of the gulf. According to some the ancestor of the new Barumoi Wanjare was another of Jok's sons.

The story current to the south of the gulf is that Jok was accidentally killed by his sons in an elephant hunt. A certain man called Ciro took Barumoyo and made him his servant and after various adventures together adopted him as his son. When Ciro died Barumoyo took one of his wives, Omori, and by her begat Sogol, who is the ancestor of the dominant lineages in the Kabondo and Mumbo tribal divisions, the JokeOwidi and the JokOmolo. According to Luo custom Sogol was a son of the dead Ciro and not of Barumoyo but the sons of Ciro said they did not wish him to be known by the name of their father, so he was called after Barumoyo. The descendants of Ciro by a different wife claim to be the owners of the Mumbo lands, but they are now a very small people, due it is said to their having insulted their father who banished them after his death. The descendants of Barumoyo are shown in the chart below. Only the principal lineages are given, except in the line of descent to our man for illustration.

The man Raymo can, according to the contrary, describe his lineage as KeMuma, JokOnyango, KeNdeya, BorOkoth, JokOwidi, KaSogol, and KeBarumoyo.

Each of the big lineages of the KeBarumoyo clan owns its own part of the tribal territory and within a section owned by a large lineage the

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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GB parts owned by its branches are fairly distinct. Intermarriage is the main
GH cause of intermittment and marriage within this clan is not permitted.

There are a number of stranger lineages in Kwerenaya (Wagwa, Kanewala, Kakmoun, Jokadera, etc.) but they are small lineages and so much intermarried with the dominant Kelkwenaya clan that they have no territorial and political distinctness. Some attention must now be given to the status of stranger lineages to the dominant lineage within a tribe.

We have noted that in Kwerenaya there are few stranger lineages and that they are weak ones. By far the greater majority of the tribe are members of the dominant clan. Other tribal territories display greater clan admixture and the presence of powerful stranger lineages whose numerical importance is reflected in the tribal myths. A European may not quickly become aware of these stranger elements unless local disputes force his attention to them, for the dominant clan is generally identified linguistically with the tribe. Jo-Alego means both the tribesman of Alego tribal territory and the patrilineal descendants of Alego and Kelkwenaya means both the tribesmen of Kwerenaya tribal territory and the patrilineal descendants of Kwerenaya. Therefore if a man of the Jo-Mur stranger lineage in Alego were asked outside Alego to what people he belongs he would reply that he belonged to the Alego folk, but if he were asked within the tribal territory he would say that he was a Jo-Mur, for the Jo-Mur
181 are a distinct aquatic group living in their own portion of country within
GB Alego.

GH Now, from the point of view of the dominant clan in a tribal area the
GH members of this clan alone are the *jopiny or jopuong*, the people of the
GH land and the owners of it, and the rest are *jodak*, the separated people, the strangers: though if they lived among them a long time they speak of them as *jokodo*, for *jodak* is a harsh word.

GH These stranger lineages are grafted into the lineage structure of the
GH dominant clan so that through recognition of female links the whole tribe
GH may be regarded as a system of cognatic lineages. Leo speak of the affi-
GH liated lineages as *kaewa*, lineages of *in-laws*, or as *kaser*, lineages of matri-
GH monial ancles, since it is from them that they take their wives and the mothers of their children. As the affiliated lineages have taken wives from the dominant clan they also come into the category of *ohewa*, sister's son, to its members. In this way every lineage in a tribe, whether of the dominant clan or of stranger stock, has a structural position in the system of lineages of which a tribe is composed and of which the lineages of the dominant clan are the framework.

GH The lineages of the clan which owns the tribal territory and those
GH affiliated to it seem in the past to have been on a general social equality
GH and to have acted corporately in matters of common tribal interest, particularly in war against other tribes. They were differentiated only in matters of ritual, marriage regulations, and, as explained earlier, in settlement of homicide. In recent years, however, acute differences have arisen about land in those parts of the country where the density of population is greatest, especially in the more northern tribes of Central

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Kavirondo, between the different lineages, sometimes between a lineage of the dominant clan and sometimes between two stranger lineages.

In the past there seems to have been no serious difficulty about land; there was plenty of it and more could be acquired by war and migration. People were glad, I was told, to welcome strangers who added to the fighting strength of their community and who provided them with wives for their sons. The strangers settled as sons-in-law, and become maternal uncles and sisters' sons. Personal relations between the members of the lineage of the dominant clan and the strangers who settled among them and intermarried with them were all of a kinship order. But these relationships of a kinship kind are structural points at which affiliated lineages are grafted on to the tree of descent of the dominant clan. Personal relations give place to structural relations. People do not readily quarrel with their own parents-in-law or maternal uncles or sisters' sons about land, but when the pressure of population becomes acute they may dispute with those who count as lineage in-laws, lineage maternal uncles, or lineage sisters' sons, that is to say when the relationship has become a structural one and ceased to be one of an intimate kinship kind, for intermarriage and thereby the formation of new kinship links between a lineage and another living on its land must for reasons of exogamy become less and less. There is a bit difference between a member of the Jokiljo lineage of Alego and a man of a stranger lineage whom he calls sister's son to a personal sense and a man whom he calls sister's son in a structural sense.

Hence we find to-day in the unreserved tribal areas considerable inter-lineage enmity about land. If it is not a new feature of Luo life it has certainly been accentuated by European rule and restrictions. Tribal cohesion has suffered from peace and land hunger has increased disharmony.

The *jopiny* claim the land in virtue of their ownership of the tribal territory and point to their *gendini*, their ancient homestead sites, which are remembered for many generations, and to the graves of their ancestors in the disputed area. But stranger lineages which have grown numerous and powerful may also claim to be *jopiny* in the same area in that they have resided there for many generations and also can point there to their ancestral homestead sites and the graves of their forebears. Sometimes a second stranger lineage have grown strong at the expense of a first and pushed them off their lands, so that three lineages can lay claim to the district. Problems of this kind were arousing much feeling in Alego during my visit, for there land is becoming scarce. They may be further complicated by the fact that the present dominant clan has in the past ousted a clan more dominant in the territory and who also have in the land their homestead sites and graves, for it is held by all Luo that title deeds to lands are ancient homestead sites and ancestral graves and that a man has a right to ask for land to cultivate in the district where his ancestors lived and are buried. This does not mean that a man can come back from the tribal area in which his family have lived for several generations to that in which his earlier forebears lived and claim the land

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on which a gentle, homestead site, of one of them is situated; but it means that he has a right to cultivate somewhere in that district. There is in this way an overlapping of rights in a territory.

Among the Luo ownership of agricultural land is vested in the lineage and every member of a lineage which owns an area has the right to cultivate in it. The individual has only rights of use, which are hereditary so long as the land is maintained in use; but a man cannot sell the land, for his whole lineage and maybe other lineages as well have rights in it; nor can he reclaim it if he has left it for some years and it is being cultivated by another man. Grazing land (*puot*) is always common. An individual can share his agricultural land with kinsmen, such as a daughter's husband or sister's son, and stranger lineages take root in the soil in the first instance through a personal tie of this kind. Sometimes a lineage of strangers flourish at the expense of the lineage whose forebears first gave permission to their ancestors to cultivate the soil and they begin to get a grip on the land and to count their graves and homestead sites in it. Or the lineage which owns the land increases and wants more land for its own members but finds that the land it wants is under cultivation by the descendants of strangers who now regard it as theirs by right and they begin to contest their occupation of it. They cannot directly challenge their use of the land nor just turn them from possession while they are using it, but they encroach on their cultivations and by constant pressure try to squeeze them out. The strangers have redress before European constituted courts but if they are weak they do not care to resort to them because they know that even if they win the case they must continue to live among their more powerful neighbours against whom they have proceeded. For such situations one cannot find rulings in past custom and when disputes of this kind occur to-day settlement depends on a variety of factors, the strength of the stranger lineages, their wealth, their influence with the chiefs and their ability to bribe them, and so forth.

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This paper is sketchy and the survey on which it is based was superficial. Those investigating the Luo at the present time will doubtless give a fuller, more accurate, and more balanced account of their social organization. Nevertheless, the enquiry has served its limited purpose in that it has shown that Luo political structure with its lineage framework is an essential characteristic like that I have recorded for the Nuer. There are some differences, which I hope to discuss soon in a comparative study of Nilotic lineages as a contribution towards that study of lineage on a broader African and world-wide basis which research is slowly making possible. However, it may not prove easy to determine whether the differences are significant till an intensive study of the Luo has been made. All this paper claims to do is to show that the Luo have the same type of structure as the Nuer. Recent research has demonstrated that both Anuak and Shilluk have a lineage structure though it is

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combined with apical features in different forms of chieftainship and kingship. On the other hand the Lango appear to have a lineage system like that of the Luo and are also like them an acephalous society. Unfortunately it is not possible to judge from Driberg's account how close is the resemblance between Luo and Lango lineages or what is the political function of the Lango lineage, and further research would be required before the Lango can be placed on the basis of this feature in a typological series of the Nilotic peoples.